

Beyond Referrals: Levers for addressing harmful sexual behaviours between students at school in England

From sexist comments and harassment through to contact offences, schools are locations where young people experience sexual abuse from peers. This paper reports findings of a multi-site study into levers for preventing peer-sexual abuse in educational settings in England. Data gathered through practice observations, case and policy reviews and focus groups with professionals and students were analysed through the lens of both a whole school approach and Contextual Safeguarding with a particular focus on gender to identify four levers of peer-sexual abuse prevention. This paper reports how these four levers interact to create social conditions which prevent, or reduce the risk of, peer-sexual abuse in schools. Opportunities for schools, regulators and child protective services to use these levers, and the methodologies employed to identify them, are also outlined, as well as implications for policy.

Introduction

Every day you either get called a slut, a slag a ho. [...] It's normal, like the first time it happened to us, we told someone. Then we just got used to it (Ellie, SY-student).

Young people have told researchers, journalists and professionals about their experiences of sexual harassment and violence in schools. Not only have their accounts alerted us to the prevalence of these issues but they have pointed to the areas in schools where students feel unsafe and the extent to which these encounters have become a normalised feature of peer-interactions. In response to accounts such as Ellie's, policymakers, school leaders and the police have come under increased pressure to develop effective responses to harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) in schools. This paper contributes to this debate by identifying levers within both schools and safeguarding partnerships (children's services, health, police and community safety etc.) that can address HSB between students. In doing so, it:

- offers a conceptual framework and methodological approach for exploring student safety in school contexts
- identifies that levers for protecting students in school are held by agencies both within and outside of education
- provides evidence to inform inspection frameworks used to inspect standards of practice within schools, social care and health settings

Cumulatively, the levers presented demonstrate opportunities for creating school environments where the social conditions challenge, rather than enable, HSB. These opportunities encourage shifts in practice and debate from the duty schools have to ‘refer’ concerns about sexual harm into children’s social care to considering the role a range of agencies, including schools, play in creating safe educational settings where risks associated with HSB are reduced.

Harmful sexual behaviour in schools – an overview

Sexual violence and harassment between students in education provisions is a matter of global concern— consistently reported by school students in research and media interviews in the UK, US and Australia, for example (Barter, McCarry, Berridge & Evans, 2009; BBC, 2015; Ringrose, Gill, Livingstone & Harvey, 2011; Conroy, 2013; Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse [Royal Commission], 2017). Termed, ‘harmful sexual behaviour’ for the purposes of this paper (Hackett, 2014) the behaviours they have described range from sexualised and sexist language being used by their classmates through to unwanted touching and penetrative assaults in school corridors and empty classrooms. When viewed across this continuum the term HSB describes a range of sexual behaviours displayed by young people and considered developmentally inappropriate, violent or abusive (Hackett, 2004; 2014) (Figure 1). While there is evidence that both young men and

young women are sexually victimised in this way in school – evidence suggests that HSB in schools is gendered issue disproportionately affecting young women (End Violence Against Women Coalition [EVAW], 2010; Ringrose et al., 2011).

Professionals who work within, and with, schools play a fundamental role in preventing, identifying and responding to HSB between students (Meyer, 2008; HM Inspectorate of Probation [HMIP], 2013; Conroy, 2013; GirlGuiding, 2015; House of Commons [HoC], 2016). Examples of interventions piloted by education provisions include: bystander intervention training to reducing incidents of sexual violence on college campuses (Coker et al., 2011); a combination of updating school policies, providing relationships curriculum and delivering targeted interventions – a whole-school approach – intended to address harmful gender norms and inequalities believed to underpin HSB (The Bristol Ideal, 2012); as well as utilising situational crime prevention to ‘design-out’ opportunities for sexual violence in schools by increasing supervision or taking-over locations for positive activities (Foshee et al., 1998; Smallbone, Rayment-Mchugh & Smith, 2013).

Despite pockets of good international practice, responses to HSB in England’s schools are inconsistent – with varied levels of professional competence and confidence in responding (HMIP, 2013). Evidence suggests some school professionals have minimised the impact of sexual harassment on students (HMIP, 2013; GirlGuiding, 2015; Firmin, 2017a), or viewed HSB incidents as associated only to those directly involved rather than being symptomatic of wider school cultures and norms (HMIP, 2013; Safeguarding Teenage Intimate Relationships, 2015; Firmin, 2017a). There are also inconsistencies in consequences for students who display HSB in schools. In some schools, for example, students displaying HSB continue to attend school with those they abused, whereas in other cases they will be excluded from mainstream education (HMIP, 2013; HoC, 2016; Firmin, 2017a; BBC, 2017). For the most part interventions are: levelled at individual students, as opposed to wider

school cultures; intended as ‘behaviour management’ as opposed to ‘welfare’ interventions, and; inconsistently supported by wider multi-agency partnerships of which they are a part (HMIP, 2013; Firmin, 2017b). Some of these challenges suggest a lack of clarity – and shared position amongst policymakers and professionals – regarding: a) what types of behaviour are harmful; b) whether professionals should only be concerned about behaviours constituting a criminal offence or are examples of child abuse (rather than their antecedents), and; c) whether interventions should target individuals who display HSB or also consider problematic institutional cultures associated to HSB (HMIP, 2013; Royal Commission, 2018; Anon, 2017a).

The absence of coherent and consistent responses to HSB in schools impacts on both students who have been abused and those who harm them. For students who have experienced abuse, HSB can result in reduced levels of confidence and concentration in class and school engagement, as well as having more profound and long lasting effects on their physical, sexual and mental health (HoC, 2016). For students who display HSB, these behaviours can disrupt development, cause distress and rejection and increase future victimisation (Hackett, 2014).

England’s policy response

Building on qualitative studies where young people described experiences of HSB in education (Barter et al., 2009; EVAW, 2010; Ringrose et al., 2011), in 2015, the BBC issued a Freedom of Information request to all police forces in England, asking about reports of ‘sexual violence’ in schools. Results evidenced 5,500 sexual offences in schools, including 600 rapes, reported to police forces between 2012 and 2015 (BBC, 2015). In response, schools called for further advice and support to address HSB. The Government stated that schools concerned about the welfare of students needed to refer those concerns to children’s social care – but did not detail which forms of HSB would reach a threshold for referral.

Since 2015 there has been increasing recognition that schools' responses to HSB between students goes beyond their duty to refer concerns to children's social care. The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee launched a parliamentary inquiry into sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools in 2016 (HoC, 2016); the findings evidenced the need for a national policy response, improved access to sex and relationships education and increased scrutiny of practices in schools by the education regulator.

While the inquiry response led to the Government committing to develop statutory relationships and sex education, a broader response to HSB between students was still wanting. In light of this, the EVAW (2017), citing the Human Rights Act and the Equality Act, suggested the absence of guidance regarding sexual violence in schools meant the Government had failed to specifically 'protect girls' and provide them with equal access to safe education. In 2017, The Equality and Human Rights Commission began funding a legal challenge against the UK Education Secretary on these grounds (Weale, 2017).

This pressure accelerated changes to education and child protection policy in England. In 2017 the Government published specific advice for schools when responding to sexual violence between students (Department for Education [DfE], 2017) and increased references to peer-on-peer abuse in statutory guidance to educational institutions in England on protecting the welfare of children (DfE, 2016). These policy changes communicated to schools that HSB disproportionately impacts young women and listed their options for responding to HSB incidents. The policy position outlined that behaviours which are inappropriate or problematic may be addressed internally by school policies/sanctions/curriculum or via 'early help' or youth services, whereas those in which a child has been directly abused may require a referral to statutory children's services and/or the police. While progressive, neither policy document has detailed how the response of schools, or the partnerships in which they sit, should be scrutinised by national inspectorates

– and yet these regulatory bodies remain under pressure to leverage consistent practice in schools on this issue (HoC, 2016).

Methodology

This study aimed to address the aforementioned gap in knowledge – providing evidence upon which to inspect responses to HSB in school. While multiple calls had been made for inspectorates to play a role in addressing HSB, further detail was required as to what they should inspect. The research team were also keen to highlight ways in which multi-agency safeguarding partnerships enabled, or limited, schools’ attempts to address HSB. Evidence already suggested schools were unable to manage risks associated to HSB between students on their own – and resources and structures available within statutory partnerships informed the sufficiency of responses (HMIP, 2013; HoC, 2016; Firmin, 2017b; BBC, 2017). As such researchers designed a mixed-methods approach intended to:

- a) Identify levers within schools and multi-agency partnerships which, in theory, prevent (or effectively respond to) HSB between students
- b) Identify factors within schools and multi-agency partnerships which, in theory, normalise/exasperate (prevent an effective response to) HSB between students.

Theoretical framework

Data was interpreted through the lens of three primary positions. Firstly, not only was Hackett’s continuum used to define the sexual behaviours under study, it formed the basis of our positionality about how sexual behaviours develop. Rather than viewing HSB as a consequence of individual deficits or pathology in children we believe these behaviours are shaped by wider socio-cultural contexts in which they occur and develop across a continuum. Secondly, we analysed the data from a feminist epistemological standpoint; particularly the relationship between the contexts in which HSB was displayed and broader gendered

discourses surrounding gender and sexuality. While individual members of the research team occupied multiple subject positions in relation age, nationality and ethnicity, all were women. As such, our position as women and the intersection of our subject positions with other identity markers, shaped the analysis of the data and the relationship between ourselves and the participants involved. Thirdly, our research programme is dedicated to developing 'safeguarding' or 'child-welfare' responses to harm – and therefore we view all data analysed through that lens (as opposed to criminal justice). As such we were focused on identifying routes to creating safety in schools that would utilise criminal sanctions as a last resort, and recognised the value of social and societal interventions, as well as those with a psycho-social basis. The methodological design of the study and its identified implications therefore, are informed through this three-fold positional lens.

We required a theoretical framework that enabled complimentary analysis of data collected within both schools and the multi-agency partnerships to which they were associated. Building on evidence into the cultural dynamics of school-based HSB (Barter et al., 2009; Ringrose et al., 2011), analysis needed to explore social rules associated to HSB (and practices/systems informing these rules) rather than just evidence of the behaviours.

From the perspective of schools, practitioners, campaigners and policymakers have used the 'whole school approach' (WSA) for addressing gender inequality (The Bristol Ideal, 2012; The Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime , 2018) as a framework for building responses to sexual violence between students. Proponents of a WSA model argue that to promote gender inequality and combat violence against women and girls schools need to provide more than comprehensive sex and relationships education (SRE) to students. Additionally, schools need to ensure consistent messaging about healthy relationships, gender and safety across policies and procedures and their wider curriculum; and work in partnership with specialist organisations to support students where appropriate. Through these practices

schools can become environments that challenge gendered violence and the norms underpinning it.

The systemic approach promoted by the WSA model needed to be mirrored in our method for analysing data associated to practices within multi-agency partnerships more broadly. Contextual Safeguarding (Firmin, 2017a; DfE, 2017), an approach to child protection that has foregrounded the need to create contexts/social conditions that prevent abuse, provided this complimentary theoretical framework. Contextual Safeguarding has developed as a conceptual, strategic and operational child protection framework in England since 2013. Drawing upon Bourdieu (1992) it argues that the behaviour of children and young people is informed by social rules at play within extra-familial (peer group, school, neighbourhood and online) as well as familial contexts. Contextual Safeguarding recognises that during adolescence rules within extra-familial contexts can bear a stronger influence on young people's decisions/behaviour than the nature of their familial relationships (Warr, 2002; Coleman, 2011; Firmin, 2017a). In light of this, the approach identifies that child protection frameworks, which traditionally assess/intervene with family relationships to safeguard young people, need to reach into extra-familial environments and relationships. Through this process, professionals, parents and young people can work together to change cultures within extra-familial settings, including schools, that may enable (or at least fail to challenge) harmful behaviours.

Gender theories guided our use of both WSA and Contextual Safeguarding to assess the data. In particular, Connell's (2005) notion of hegemonic masculinity supported us to understand the dominant discourses shaping gender within schools and the ways that these were embodied, practiced and subverted by young people. Within the research, gender, conceptualised as a fluid performative practice (Butler, 1990), was central to our interpretation of the research. The research considered how the dominance of hegemonic

masculinity and the prevailing impact of sexism within society generally in England, were central to the ways that sexual behaviours, norms and practices were shaped and embodied by students and staff within participating schools and how HSB developed and was responded to. Through this lens, we considered the extent to which structures, systems and practices utilised to prevent and respond to HSB were embedded within and promoted, or challenged, sexist discourses relating to gender.

Data Collection

Data was collected from four research sites in England. Each Site constituted a Local Authority (LA) area. For each Site, the research team worked with a local steering group and the national schools' inspectorate (Ofsted) to identify secondary education providers to participate. Education providers were selected in order to provide diversity across a number of criteria including: school type, gender makeup, religious character, most recent inspection grades, and if the school was already engaged with the LA to address HSB. Seven education providers, from three of the four participating Sites, successfully engaged in the project¹. Participating education providers had a range of identifying markers including being: further education colleges (for students aged 16+) (n=2); alternative provisions for young people excluded from mainstream education (n=2); faith (n=1) and secular (n=6) provisions; majority male (n=3) and mixed (n=4) provisions.

Using a range of methods, core sets of 'complimentary data' were collected in local authorities and education provisions as outlined in Table 1

¹ 12 were approached initially – three in each LA – and seven responded positively and were able to participate within the research timescales.

Schools	Multi-agency partnership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 reviews of behaviour incident logs within schools • Reviews of policies and procedures • 9 observations in schools • 17 focus groups with young people • 12 focus groups with school staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 case reviews of incidents of HSB • Reviews of policies and procedures • 16 observations of multi-agency meetings relating to HSB • 4 focus groups with multi-agency practitioners

Table 1 Research methods

- 1) Case reviews: documentation of how services had responded to incidents of HSB between students focused on the partnerships engagement with schools and wider contextual environments associated with incidents. In schools this information was held in ‘behaviour incident logs’ on school systems. In LAs this information was held as a social care referral file.
- 2) A review of policies and procedures: relevant to HSB (safeguarding, sexual violence, behaviour management etc.) to build a picture of local partnership/school response on paper. In LAs this included strategies to address youth violence, gender-based violence and sexual exploitation within their multi-agency partnership. In schools this included safeguarding, behaviour, exclusions, curriculum, and equalities policies.
- 3) Observations: to understand the practice responses to HSB and see interactions between professionals or professionals and students. In schools this included observations of lessons, transitions between classes and the start and end of the school day. All school observations were carried out by two members of the research team. Written notes were taken during the observations by both researchers. In local sites it involved observing multi-agency meetings where HSB-related issues were discussed to discern an understanding of the wider partnerships relationship with, and

knowledge of, schools in the area. Multi-agency meeting observations were carried out by one researcher and notes recorded on an observation template.

- 4) Focus Groups: with multi-agency professionals, school staff and students, to explore their ability to identify HSB between students and what they recognise as responses from practitioners, parents and peers. In local sites focus groups involved a multi-agency practitioner group (including social care, policing, health professionals and community groups). The number of participants involved in the focus groups are outlined in table 2:

	Number of focus groups	Total number of participants
Multi-agency	4	25
School staff	12	58
Students	17	59
Total	33	142

Table 2 Focus group breakdown

Student focus groups

Focus groups were facilitated by two members of the research team. With students a range of qualitative techniques were used to explore four themes: 1) types of HSB students experience in school 2) how students in the school might respond to HSB; 3) areas of safety in the school; and 4) how the school responds to HSB. Qualitative techniques included discussion and; scenarios and ranking exercises, where the researchers provided participants with scenarios of HSB and students were asked to place themselves on a line, ranging from tell a teacher to do nothing, depending on what they thought a student in their school would do in response to witnessing or hearing about the HSB. Six researchers were involved in the data collection process. Data was gathered between April and October 2017.

Analysis

Research findings were analysed over several stages by three members of the research team. The initial stage involved the identification of enablers and barriers to addressing HSB within the data set. Enablers and barriers were agreed, and then combined into larger descriptive categories and clusters based on similarity and relationships (Charmaz, 2006). Reflective workshops with the research team and site steering group meetings were then carried out to sense-check the categories and clusters. This process identified four key thematic codes (clusters), and sub-categories (categories), to provide an organisational coding framework for detailed qualitative analysis of the data. The four thematic codes were shared by schools and multi-agency partnerships – but each of these had their own set of sub-categories. Sub-categories were developed from an amalgamation of practices across the institutions. These practices were identified as either a barrier or enabler to addressing HSB in schools. Where barriers were identified, theoretical levers were developed that would mitigate that barrier. At the third stage, detailed qualitative analysis of the data was conducted against the coding framework using NVivo 11. During this process categories were refined, validated and finalised to create an agreed set of sub-categories under the four themes. Themes and sub-categories were converted into a set of findings against which to measure local practices.

Finally, the components were converted into a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rated mechanism. This created a method for performance monitoring, and an accompanying radar chart, to aid visual counts. Separate RAG-rated mechanisms were developed for multi-agency partnerships and for education providers.

Focus group quotations are anonymised via a coding scheme denoting site letter (W-Z) and participant type (multi-agency professionals [MA-professionals], school staff [sch-staff] or student [student]). For example ‘SX-sch-staff’ refers to a focus group in ‘site X with school staff’. Pseudonyms are used for quotations.

Ethics and limitations

This study received ethical approval from the authors' academic institution. In addition, approvals were gained from the ethical procedures of the four participation LAs. Throughout the research, ethics was viewed as an ongoing reflexive concern through discussion with an independent Research Advisory Group, rather than a discrete procedural requirement. In addition, youth advisors attached to the research centre advised on the development of research material used with student participants.

The data collected for this study generated rich insights into the enablers and barriers of addressing HSB in schools. Despite this benefit, there are a number of limitations. While HSB also occurs within primary schools, due to ethical and time constraints the project solely focused on partnership and education providers' response to HSB at secondary school level. As the research was carried out in four LAs and in seven education provisions, conclusions cannot necessarily be generalised across other LAs or schools. However, the objective of the study was not to identify the nature and patterns of practice across the country – rather it was to identify and articulate elements of practice that enabled or prevented effective practice. Therefore, the commonality of themes identified across the four multi-agency partnerships and seven schools, and the repetition of findings with other research in this area, enabled the team to garner significant learning from the data available – particularly when viewed through the lens of inspection and in the context of wider international research.

Findings

Data from the research sites indicated four thematic areas for inspection that would contribute to preventing, and responding to, HSB in schools – referred to as levers (Figure 2). These were:

1. The *structures and systems* through which a framework for consistent responses to HSB was available to professionals in schools and multi-agency partnerships

2. Measures focused on the *prevention* of HSB, including creating cultural school contexts that promoted safe social norms and healthy relationships
3. The ability of professionals and students to *identify* HSB in schools
4. The availability, use and effectiveness of *responses and interventions* following incidents in schools.

While to an extent these levers were distinct, and characterised in particular ways, they are also intertwined – enabling and reinforcing each other – to create school environments where HSB is challenged and healthy relationships enabled.

Structures and Systems

The ability of schools to effectively address HSB was informed by the systems/structures used by staff and students to identify, refer and respond to concerns, as well as structures/systems used by wider multi-agency partnerships of which those schools were a part.

Across participating schools, staff and students described their awareness of school systems for responding to forms of HSB across Hackett’s continuum, and how knowledge of these systems informed the decisions they made:

I think there’s been a big whole school push with regard to: ‘it’s good to talk’ kind of mentality, problem sharing. And staff hopefully get that message too. [...] The way in which we report things of a safeguarding nature, there’s a procedure that’s followed which is clear. And also the students, how do they know? So they can see how things are being dealt with in another scenario, so they kind of maybe learn from that (SY-sch-staff)

I: If you were to tell a teacher [about an incident of HSB] who would you speak to?
[Teacher name]. She is nice, we trust her. She always has food. She wouldn’t tell other people if you asked her not to. If she had to pass something on she would just tell [DSL name] and she would be the only person who would talk to your parents (SY-student).

Structures and systems provided pathways for students to disclose concerns to staff, and staff to refer these concerns onto colleagues within and external to schools:

So you give them [local partnership phone line] a call and say “I’ve got this problem, what is the best way to deal with it?” And usually they’re pretty good, they’ll say, “this is the line you should take” or “this is the action you should take”. So I’d done that a few times and eventually it just got to the point where I was like, I need to just refer this in now. So it got referred into social care and within I think six hours, they were holding a meeting at the police station (SY-sch-staff).

The success of school systems was informed by LA and partner agency policies that were used by professionals who received and managed concerns the schools raised.

School representation at multi-agency meetings where related issues, such sexual exploitation and youth violence, were being discussed, as well as the local authority involvement in meetings regarding school exclusions (some of which were associated to HSB), were both additional structures through which partnerships could identify, and agree a response to, HSB between students.

Associated to the above were structures that schools were able to draw upon to engage parents, and wider multi-agency partners within children’s services, youth offending, policing and health for example, into their attempts to both prevent, and respond to, HSB. For example, schools had varying systems to make parents aware, and engage them in the design, of sex and relationships education. Likewise, there was varied use of, and access to, multi-agency resources and expertise that could enhance curriculum content, such as safer school police officers or youth workers being engaged by some schools to deliver parts of the health and well-being curriculum.

All such activities were best supported in schools and multi-agency partnerships with a comprehensive HSB strategy, as well as procedures that detailed the response to incidents. Some participating schools had not developed these documents, despite their local multi-

agency partnership having done so. Likewise, some schools had created more advanced and detailed procedures than the partnerships of which they were a part. Such disjointed frameworks impeded the implementation of consistent practices to address HSB in schools. It is important to note that the mere development of HSB strategies and procedures didn't guarantee consistent and effective practice in schools:

there are times when I've taken the behaviour policy off of there. I've taken it into a room, I've sat down and I've read it because I just has felt like; 'what is the behaviour policy about any of these things [HSB]?' (SZ-sch-staff).

Strategic documents provided staff with structures through which to offer consistent and effective responses to students affected by HSB. Their usability, and the extent to which they directed staff to address any associated welfare issues (such as previous experiences of victimisation, familial abuse, social isolation and learning difficulties) and therefore go beyond behaviour management, varied. This was also true for multi-agency partnerships – particularly varying degrees by which their documentation detailed the children's social care and health responses to HSB incidents in addition to the role of criminal justice.

Collectively these structures and systems within schools and partnerships provided frameworks through which professionals could consistently prevent, identify and respond to HSB levers of practice considered below.

Prevention

Both staff and students identified that activities intended to prevent HSB were a critical lever for protection in schools. A central vehicle for prevention was the school curriculum. We observed relationships and sex education (RSE) of varying quality during the research: a variance created by several factors. Firstly, teaching resources informed the quality of RSE content. For example, in one school a teacher had developed their own resources for a lesson on pornography without reference to resources nationally available through specialist

organisations. This resulted in the teacher using a fact sheet from *Pornhub* (a pornography site) including information about the use of the site and the most searched for pornography terms. Whereas in another school, quality assured lesson plans linked to community-based resources provided the foundations for content. Secondly, there was noticeable variation in the support multi-agency partnerships made available to schools – one partnership had commissioned an art-based intervention to be delivered to all local students for example. Finally, schools needed to proactively access, and engage with, local specialist services when designing curriculum – and not all did. Even where LAs had funded specialist HSB provision and advice, not all schools drew upon the expertise of such services when designing student resources. When schools worked in partnership with the local authority, students could access consistent messages about sex and relationships both within, and outside, of school.

The reach of curriculum was also important. Some schools confined RSE to discrete lessons or one-off ‘drop-down days’ – where the wider timetable was suspended once a year for students to access health and well-being curriculum. Comparatively, others sought to embed the messages from RSE classes in other lessons and activities. Students remarked about the ‘ethos’ of their school and the extent to which the principles taught in RSE coloured wider school cultures:

Obviously if you report something, staff have to deal with it. You're told that when you come, like on your first day, you're told that on your induction when you sign up and you see it everywhere: “see something, say something”. All of those little things around, so you know that it's dealt with, you know it's a focal point (SW-student).

Some schools practiced what they preached. From poster messages about homophobia through to reflecting on the gender equality in class, messages about respectful relationships infiltrated the fabric of school life. Where these examples were identified, prevention

activities created social conditions that promoted healthy contact between students and thereby offered a lever for addressing HSB.

To be effective, preventative activity needed to be relevant. Staying abreast of emerging threats in neighbourhoods and online platforms, as well as behaviour trends in school, was one route taken by schools to ensure their prevention work reflected the lives of students. One alternative education provider was able to assign a 'HSB flag' to incidents on their electronic behaviour logs. In doing so the school's safeguarding lead could monitor any escalation in behaviours and intervene early to prevent critical incidents. Scanning logs for evidence of problematic (but relatively 'low level') behaviours occurring more frequently in a particular part of the school – such as near the toilets – or within a particular lesson, or peer group – could trigger an earlier intervention. Likewise, when multi-agency partnerships had the analytical capacity to map trends in the community – and could communicate trends with schools identified via established relationships – schools built responses into their preventative work.

When incidents did occur, the response offered had the potential to be preventative. A small number of students reported positive experiences of seeking support when they had witnessed/experienced HSB at school. These experiences boosted their confidence in the ability of school staff, and the wider partnership, to keep them safe:

If it was happening to someone else ... I would tell them to tell the teacher about it because my head of year actually sorted it out for me and it didn't happen again, they tried it but it didn't work (SX-student).

Ensuring that students, parents, staff and wider local professionals knew about successful interventions contributed to cultures that promoted disclosure and help-seeking and reproached peer-abuse. Low confidence in the value of intervention created conditions where HSB was permissible rather than prevented.

Identification

To log, and effectively respond to, concerning behaviour professionals and students needed to recognise it as such. In some schools the only staff who had been trained to recognise HSB – particularly behaviours that were more inappropriate than abusive – were the safeguarding leads. As such professional and student ability to identify HSB informed prevention efforts but was also a lever for addressing HSB in its own right.

Schools that shared resources for distinguishing between normal and harmful sexual behaviours increased staff ability to effectively identify HSB. Key to this was using a shared definition of HSB by all school staff and up-to-date HSB resources, drawn from those used by the wider multi-agency partnership. This ensured a shared understanding of harm, enabled consistent recognition of HSB within the school and increased staff confidence in identifying when a response was required:

Once you've realised that it's kind of bigger I think it is relatively easy to distinguish. But once you've realised it's not just rape for example, then it's much larger than that and can take different forms...I'm not saying by any means that the next person could identify every single example of it, but I think we as teachers, much more able to identify the different aspects of it (SZ-sch-staff).

In the absence of shared understandings of HSB and available resources to facilitate recognition of harm, professionals within a multi-agency partnership reflected that school staff were using personal perspectives to disentangle normal and harmful sexual behaviours:

There's a lack of knowledge still, through no fault of their own, there's a lack of objectivity around these types of behaviours still. So you will find that some people - not just saying in schools, but we're talking about schools - will be opinion driven (SZ-MA-professionals).

Alignment between school and multi-agency resources further facilitated shared understanding of thresholds for HSB and the required interventions at all levels of harm.

The ability of staff to identify HSB informed the effectiveness of disclosure management and how students experienced professional responses. In the absence of standard messages as to which behaviours are inappropriate mixed and contradictory messages prevailed:

Young people are not clued up in this area of what is acceptable, one teacher might say “out, I don't want to hear that language”, and another teacher might go “oh come on, settle down lads”, there’s no blanket so they don’t know (SY-MA-professionals).

Additionally, the availability and variety of mechanisms for students to safely disclose concerns to staff influenced effective identification of HSB. The failure to provide safe options for disclosure was highlighted by students as a significant barrier to identification of HSB:

I'm not comfortable around a lot of teachers to tell them that sort of stuff. I don't really have that sort of relationship with any teachers. So, it would be very difficult (SY-student).

- And another thing. If you do tell a teacher, the teachers should like not tell anyone. But the teachers end up just telling everyone, and then they're [the person that disclosed] called a snitch.
- They tell the whole staff room...
- ... The teachers tell the whole school. And if then it's raised up and everyone gangs up on that one person (SY-student).

Alongside the identification of individual incidents of HSB, the availability of school and local partnership systems to record and flag HSB (as noted in the previous section) also assisted in trend identification.

Collectively, the above elements of identification enhanced a cultural context within schools and partnerships that recognised (and challenged) both harmful social norms and developmentally inappropriate behaviour. While we observed such examples during school

observations, participants more readily commented on cultural contexts within schools that blurred boundaries and hampered efforts to identify problematic behaviour:

I think it's systemic. I've dealt with sexualised language and incidents in every school I've worked in from boys, but this is definitely, I believe this is particularly bad here and I'm not sure what it is exactly, but I found it really quite disturbing when I first started here, and I've just become more used to it (SZ-sch-staff).

The ability of schools and partnerships to mutually recognise the cumulative impact of HSB was bolstered by language that described the environmental, and cultural, dynamics of HSB when making referrals, conducting assessments and in meetings – rather than just the behaviours and individuals concerned. The capacity to broaden the identification lens to account for environmental elements of HSB coloured all levers to addressing it in schools – including the responses following incidents of abuse.

Response and intervention

Analysis of school and multi-agency responses and interventions to HSB considered the broader implications of incidents to the whole school, as opposed to focussing only on the individual students affected. Furthermore, this lever explored the extent to which responses represented an iterative approach to preventing HSB. While the three other levers – structures and systems, prevention and identification - outlined elements of a contextual response prior to an incident of HSB, this final lever evaluated the extent to which these elements were in use following an incident, and whether incidents in-turn informed schools' approaches to prevention, identification and the systems and structures in use. Therefore, response and intervention considered not only if there were pathways in place, but the extent to which these were consistently used. The research revealed that across all participating schools, abusive incidents of HSB had occurred and, as reported by staff and students, the response to these incidents varied significantly – both across incidents and between schools:

Then the school won't see it as serious, "Oh get over it." There's not really a punishment you could do. The way they handle situations is really bad (SZ-student).

I have to say schools don't really put as much into it as they should. Because outside of school, sexual violence or sexual crime is punished much more harshly. Where here, sometimes sexual crime will just be overlooked (SY-student).

While 'structures and systems' provided a framework for considering which processes schools and partnerships have in place prior to incidents occurring, analysis of previous incidents revealed the varying extent to which these levers were utilised when incidents did occur. For example, while safeguarding policies in all schools outlined the referral pathway between the school and multi-agency partnerships, and while all partnerships had some HSB provision in place, this was not always fully utilised. Practitioner reflections suggested that following an incident, some schools were hesitant to make a safeguarding referral:

We [Mental Health service] get some referrals where there's either a safeguarding risk or high risk in there, and you need to go back and say, "Have you made a safeguarding referral", "Oh no. I need to do that?", "Yeah, you need to do that" (SZ-MA-professionals).

This was not the case in all schools. In some, staff suggested that when HSB incidents occurred, having a clear policy framework in place supported their response. Furthermore, where a good relationship existed between the school and partnership, staff were supported to understand the thresholds for responding to a continuum of HSB:

Where we introduced the language around harmful sexual behaviour in schools ... they're recognising there's issues but because there's a lack of services available, they're going to sit on these issues and try and manage it as much as they can internally. But essentially, most schools that we deal with feel quite helpless. So now we've come into a number of boroughs with our service, and having these relationships, they're better because people have these established relationships, they're better at responding to it because they know they have the outlet to refer into and also they phone us and get a bit of guidance around "is this an appropriate referral or not?" (SX-MA-professionals).

In addition to factors related to the implementation of structures and systems, were the factors that contributed to intervention into HSB itself. In particular, analysis explored the extent to which responses were situated within safeguarding as opposed to purely punitive responses. In some schools, or in response to some instances, the approach to incidents took steps to safeguard all students – both those that were harmed and those that instigated harm:

It's educating rather than demonising. I think that's what we've got to remember, we've got to educate them, because they don't understand, rather than just punish them (SY-sch-staff).

However, in other schools, students and practitioners suggested that responses focussed on sanctions, and in the most extreme blamed victims:

But if you got these people in schools who have quite a lot of contact with the young people, they're just really issuing sanctions and detentions and calling home, then they're missing a trick (SX-MA-professionals).

The reason that this happens in most cases is because girls are dumb. They do dumb stuff. Even rape to an extent. The dumb girls get raped. (SZ-student).

Furthermore, the support provided to students was often time-limited. In some cases, support ended at the point of referral, with limited opportunities for pastoral care provided by the school.

However, students highlighted the importance of providing on-going care that supported their wellbeing:

Just having that support of just being able to tell someone about it was a huge relief. I mean my friends are a great support as well, but when you have an adult on your side, it's really useful. But my teachers as well, they go above and beyond. Like one specific teacher, my photography teacher, she is amazing to talk to about stuff like that. So, when something like that happens, she is totally on it (SZ-student).

Furthermore, schools where the response to HSB was grounded in a welfare perspective, rather than victim-blaming, created an environment- a school ethos- where students, in addition to staff, supported those affected. However, in some schools, students perpetuated victim-blaming narratives in violent and harmful ways which further policed students and polarised the student body:

I've come across quite a lot of that where there's been sexual assaults or rapes and I've been supporting the victim, and it's been very much really on school where the perpetrator isn't in the school or anything like that, but because they've gone back and shared their experience with their peer group and then that's spread like wildfire through the school. The backlash is just so intense (SW-MA-professionals).

Evaluation of the response to HSB in schools also considered the involvement and willingness of staff to respond to incidents. In schools where there was strong policies in place and a pastoral approach to care, staff often felt supported to challenge HSB when and where it happened. Yet, without this, staff did not always have the confidence to respond which diminished their motivation over-time:

Because it happens so often and we've had this conversation where you start thinking, am I being unreasonable? If I challenge a student on this, am I being, you know, because they go, "oh miss you're deep" or "why are you irritating me with this?" So you become like really, am I the problem now? and you just kind of like flip that on myself, and then you become unsure about how far to take it; should I go to senior management with this or not really? ... because you get desensitised (SZ-sch-staff).

Finally, not only did analysis of responses provide an opportunity to explore policies and processes in practice, it evidenced the extent to which incidents informed those policies in an iterative way, to prevent further harm.

Discussion: Four levers for addressing HSB

A thematic narrative is shared across the four identified levers for addressing HSB in schools. Furthermore, the levers are interwoven, reflecting and enabling each other, as illustrated in the previous section on responses and interventions to HSB in schools.

Each lever independently – and all four collectively – enable a consistent response to HSB within schools, in action: taken by staff; expected by students, and; supported via a multi-agency partnership. Consistently responding effectively to HSB contributed to an ethos that challenged norms associated to HSB. As such, the four levers targeted the cultural contexts in school – and recognised the relationship between school culture and student behaviour. In viewing HSB in context, schools – and wider multi-agency partners – can proactively approach HSB prevention and intervention. For example, targeting peer cultures or environmental factors that contributed to HSB incidents, investing in preventative activities, and identifying inappropriate behaviours before they escalated to abuse, created opportunities to de-escalate or reduce the permissibility of future incidents. Proactive approaches appeared most effective when rooted in safeguarding. In this sense, structures and systems enabled concerns about HSB to be subject to child-welfare (rather than solely criminal justice or school exclusions) processes and any underlying vulnerabilities addressed.

Consistent, contextual, proactive and safeguarding led practice therefore emerged through an interaction between the four levers identified in this study. While we did not visit any schools and partnerships where this was the case for all staff, all students, all the time – we did identify examples, accounts and discrete partnerships between teachers and wider professionals that achieved this nexus in response. As such it indicates the potential of applying all four levers to enhance school responses to HSB.

Implementation and practical application

Upon commencing this study we were tasked to identify factors that would assist inspectors

in exploring a school's capacity to address HSB – rather than looking for evidence of HSB itself. The study indicated that there were a range of factors in the practices of schools and partnerships which contributed to the four levers identified – many of which were detailed in the findings section of the paper. To support inspectors, schools and LAs in interpreting these findings we produced a 'Beyond Referrals' toolkit which schools (figures 4-7) and multi-agency partnerships could use to self-review their ability to tackle HSB between students. Each toolkit features traffic light self-assessment tables for one of the four levers presented in this paper, and each lever is disaggregated into multiple component parts – against which services can assess their protective capacity. The toolkit allows for self-assessment findings to be illustrated against a points-based matrix using radar charts and supports schools/partners to identify strengths and areas for development in how they address HSB in schools. The same tools provide regulators with a lens for considering such levers for HSB prevention during inspections.

Some of the information required to complete a Beyond Referrals self-assessment is readily available to services. However, some additional information may need to be collected, and the methods used in this research study could be adapted for services to complete their self-assessment. For example, focus groups with students, meeting observations, and reviews of cases, behaviour logs and policies/procedures, could be used to capture information. The research team produced a series of webinars and resources to guide schools in collecting information that they may not have to hand to complete a self-assessment.

Cumulatively these resources guide key stakeholders in identifying structural, cultural and practical factors within schools that can: be utilised to address; fail to challenge; or endorse, HSB. They suggest that the likelihood of HSB occurring within a school context can be reduced, but that measures to achieve this required services to move beyond behavioural interventions with individual students and towards techniques that engage with an interplay

between students, staff and school cultures/practices/procedures and HSB incidents. As a result, schools, and their wider partnerships, are required to assess themselves as well as their students prior to and following HSB incidents. Following which, interventions might be levelled at school policies, infrastructure and staffing, as well as individual students (included those referred into specialist services), to increase school safety.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of data collected within schools and the multi-agency partnerships in which they are situated it has been possible to identify and articulate four levers for enabling responses to, and where possible preventing, HSB between students. Schools, and safeguarding partnerships, can equip themselves to address HSB when they: have the *systems and structures* in place, to consistently *identify* the issue when it occurs (across a continuum of behaviours); provide effective safeguarding *interventions* in response to incidents which reach all those involved and affected, and; through this process create cultures amongst students and professionals with the capacity to *prevent* HSB.

Building on international campaigns to improve safety in schools, and policy initiatives that have been introduced in response, the data presented in this paper deepens how the aforementioned levers are understood. Campaigners have admonished the limitations of a national policy position that a school's response to HSB between students should be making a referral to children's social care. The data in this paper reinforces that critique and extends it by articulating the ways in which schools and safeguarding partnerships can move beyond referrals of individuals affected by HSB to actively address escalating concerns and create environments that address HSB.

The methodological approach employed by the research team also broadened the debates about responses to HSB between students to consider the role played by wider multi-agency partners in addressing risks within schools. Historically, debates and interventions

have largely focused on practices of schools – in isolation of wider services. While this has been helpful in galvanising a response to HSB from school professionals and national policymakers who oversee education provision, this study illustrates the ways in which school approaches may be impacted (both negatively and positively) by practices of health, children's social care, policing and other partner agencies.

The data collection techniques, conceptual frameworks and implementation methods employed by the research team have the potential to inform the methods used during self-assessment and external regulation of safeguarding in schools. While all were primarily designed as research techniques/tools, their use has produced practical resources for schools and partnership, in addition to advancing the knowledge which informs that practice. By developing methods for identifying factors that enable, or act as a barrier to, effectively addressing HSB, rather than looking for incidents of HSB specifically, this study signals how educationalists, regulators and safeguarding professionals can proactively prevent abuse. There are mechanisms that create social conditions that challenge abuse, and by utilising these professionals do not need to evidence the presence of abusive behaviours, or lack thereof, as indication of their success in this field.

The levers and associated resources developed in this study require further testing by schools and partnerships to identify the extent to which they enable practice improvements. While the findings associated to schools are applicable in a range of international contexts in which HSB between students has been identified, the findings related to multi-agency practices requires development in other countries. The US and Australia for example have multi-agency, child protection and safeguarding practices and structures which differ from England. There is the potential to build on the lessons learnt in this study and identify the multi-agency levers in such countries that may enhance school approaches to HSB between students. Regardless of local structures, the data presented in this paper provides clear

evidence for why, and how, schools need to work beyond making referrals to partner agencies and create protective environments which address, and prevent, HSB between students.

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Figures

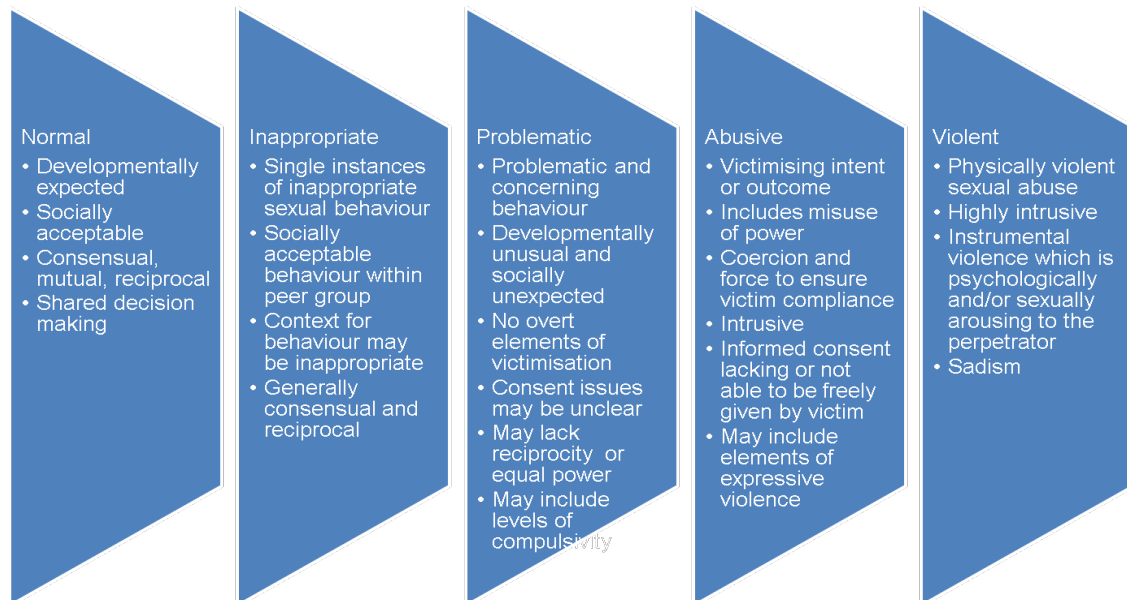


Figure 1 Hackett's Continuum of children and young people's sexual behaviours

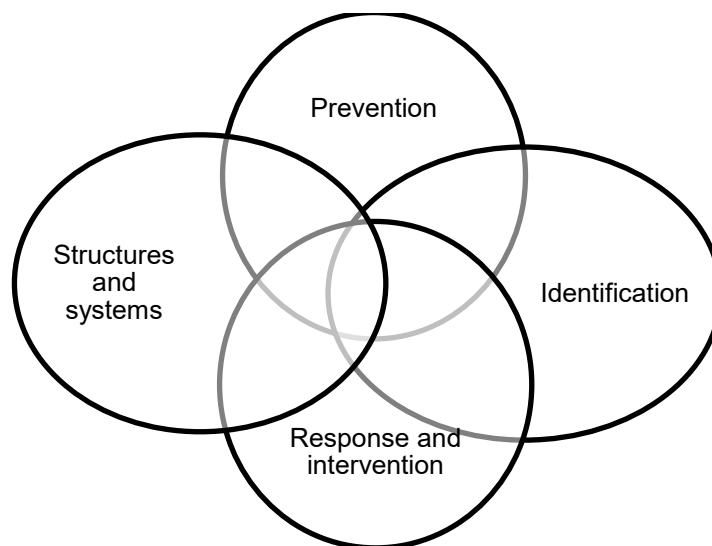


Figure 2 Levers for Addressing HSB in Schools

IDENTIFICATION (5)				
THEME	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Definition	HSB definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff within the school use the same definition of HSB, which is drawn from the HSB definition used in the MA partnership. The definition is clearly referenced in relevant school policies and other documentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple definitions of HSB are used within the school. And/or HSB definition(s) used within the school do not reflect those of the MA partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A definition for HSB is not yet used within the school.

Figure 3 Beyond Referrals RAG table row example

Beyond Referrals: Levers for addressing HSB in schools

KEY	
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
HSB	Harmful Sexual Behaviours
MA	Multi-agency
KCSIE	Keeping Children Safe in Education

STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS (7)

THEME	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
DSL	Staffing capacity related to safeguarding within school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully protected DSL role or safeguarding team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some protected time for DSL role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSL role additional to teaching/other core responsibilities without protected time.
Holistic safeguarding response to HSB	The extent to which a school's response to HSB is integrated into wider safeguarding structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's response to HSB is integrated within an overarching safeguarding strategy which includes issues such as: gang-related violence, sexual exploitation, bullying, e-safety etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has developed multiple safeguarding responses to address different forms of harm, including HSB, informed by distinct and issue-specific processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school responds to HSB solely as a behavioural (rather than safeguarding) concern.
Referral pathway	Referral pathways for raising concerns within school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear referral pathways are available for use by staff for single incidents of HSB and themes that warrant concern across the HSB continuum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear referral pathway used by staff following serious incidents of HSB. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral pathways yet to be established for HSB incidents.
HSB strategy	HSB strategy/procedure	<p>Strategic response of the school to HSB is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly outlined in a standalone HSB/peer-on-peer abuse safeguarding policy or explicitly integrated into a broader safeguarding policy and linked to national and local HSB procedures. 	<p>Strategic response of the school to HSB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is embedded within behaviour and/or exclusions policy or has been developed without reference to local or national guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has yet to develop a strategic response to HSB.
Engagement in local context	Structures through which the school can engage with, and understand, community and neighbourhood dynamics which affect students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School professionals understand and are aware of current and emerging issues locally which may be affecting students. The school has identified (and uses) pathways to engage in the local context: for example by attendance at MA meetings or engagement with safer schools officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School professionals have ad hoc access to information on local context. Some external engagement with local agencies built outside of any formal arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on local context has not yet been accessed.
Partnership input	Level of external input from partnership to develop the school's response to HSB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school draws upon resources, information, training and guidance available within the local partnership to develop their procedures and approach for responding to (and preventing) HSB. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school receives partial input from partnership to develop their response to HSB. The school draws upon the local authority to inform the development of their referral pathway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy, procedures and approach to respond to HSB, if available, have been developed independently of resources and pathways within the local partnership.
Parental engagement	Procedure adopted for engaging parents in relation to the school's approach to HSB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school proactively engages parents through preventative activity to raise awareness of HSB and encourage them to report any emerging concerns. This wider awareness is drawn upon following incidents of HSB to ensure parents are kept updated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school proactively engages parents following HSB incidents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are engaged in response to HSB incidents when there is evidence of parental anxiety.

Figure 4 RAG Tables Structures and Systems

PREVENTION (6)				
THEME	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Training	Good quality staff training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All school staff receive regular training on HSB informed by national and local evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSLs receive training relevant to HSB and disseminate to school staff. Or HSB training that is delivered to all school staff is not drawn from national or local expertise. Or HSB training for all school staff is delivered on a less than annual basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff do not receive training relevant to HSB. Or Training delivered to the DSL is not drawn from national or local expertise. Or Training is delivered at a less than annual basis to the DSL for the purposes of dissemination.
Referral pathway	HSB referral pathway within school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff use well-established internal referral pathways to raise concerns about inappropriate and problematic HSB to trigger early intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some staff raise concerns about inappropriate and problematic HSB, on an ad hoc basis, which sometimes triggers early intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a limited response to inappropriate or problematic forms of HSB. There is a perception amongst school staff that this type of behaviour cannot be addressed.
RSE	Relationships and sex education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RSE is embedded throughout the wider curriculum across all years, informs the school's ethos, and is informed by high-quality resources, local expertise and national guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RSE is delivered to all year groups as a discrete topic. RSE is drawn from local expertise and national guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RSE education is delivered to a limited number of students/year groups. Or RSE is developed without reference to national guidance or local expertise.
Prevention and incident management	The relationship between incident management and prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions taken by the school following incidents set a tone and expectation for the wider student body that contribute to the prevention of further incidents. For example, a swift response to an allegation of touching in corridors demonstrates to students that such behaviour is unacceptable, will not be tolerated and that complaints will be taken seriously. Students and staff perceive that issues associated with HSB are addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swift actions taken by the school following incidents of HSB. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited response to incidents of HSB at school has the potential to normalise such behaviours: for example incidents of non-consensual sharing of images have not been addressed.
Ethos	School ethos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school actively promotes healthy and positive relationships, gender equality and acceptance of difference. Students and staff recognise, welcome and participate in this ethos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School has taken some steps to promote positive relationships, gender equality and acceptance of difference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dominant culture amongst students and staff features evidence of harmful attitudes and the school is yet to take effective steps to address this.
Response to local concerns	Response to emerging concerns in the local environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school takes proactive steps to respond to trends identified by the local partnership prior to incidents occurring. For example following a MA meeting where concerns are raised following HSB on a particular social media platform an assembly is held within the school for students and/or parents are notified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school takes steps to respond to trends identified by the local partnership once they affect their students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is not aware of trends identified by the local MA partnership which may affect their students.



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Figure 5 RAG Tables Prevention

IDENTIFICATION (5)				
THEME	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Definition	HSB definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff within the school use the same definition of HSB, which is drawn from the HSB definition used in the MA partnership. The definition is clearly referenced in relevant school policies and other documentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple definitions of HSB are used within the school. And/or HSB definition(s) used within the school do not reflect those of the MA partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A definition for HSB is not yet used within the school.
HSB trends	HSB trends identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has systems in place to flag HSB, e.g. on safeguarding and behaviour incident logs. The school uses data to identify trends associated with HSB; chronologies are used to contextualise incidents that have occurred and peer-group mapping exercises are used to support prevention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff have an awareness of HSB trends. Systems to formally record or track HSB, such as HSB flags, are not yet fully in place within the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems to record or track HSB, e.g. HSB flags, are not yet in place at the school.
Resources	Awareness of and access to resources to assist identification of HSB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff at all levels are aware of, and have access to, up-to-date HSB resources that facilitate understanding of thresholds and identification of harm. For example, school staff use the Brook traffic light system. HSB resources used by the school are aligned with those used by the MA partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DSL has access to and understanding of HSB resources to assist identification. The staff rely on a referral to the DSL to ascertain level of harm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff do not have access to HSB resources to assist identification, resulting in some forms of HSB being undetected or not recognised as harmful.
Disclosure options	Options for disclosure of HSB	<p>Students are offered and use a variety of mechanisms for safely disclosing their concerns and/or concerns about peers in relation to HSB; for example there are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> multiple trusted individuals within school to disclose to; and safe spaces in which to access staff; and mechanisms for anonymous disclosure. 	<p>Students are offered and use mechanisms for safely disclosing their concerns and/or concerns about peers in relation to HSB; for example there are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> trusted individuals to disclose to; or a safe space in which to access staff; or mechanisms for anonymous disclosure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students do not use mechanisms for disclosure of HSB concerns. Or Mechanisms for disclosure of HSB concerns are not apparent. Or Students are unclear about how staff will use information that they give in a disclosure.
Cultural context	Cultural context of the school	<p>Language used by staff and students to describe HSB within the school recognises the spectrum of behaviours, the harm these can cause and the context in which the harm occurred.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some school staff challenge victim-blaming or gendered language used in association with HSB. Inappropriate and problematic incidents of HSB – such as calling someone a 'slag' – are responded to as behavioural issues akin to swearing. 	<p>Staff or students normalise or accept abusive social norms, identified through examples of victim-blaming or gendered language used in assessments, case notes or interactions with staff and students going unchallenged.</p>

Figure 6 RAG Tables Identification

RESPONSE AND INTERVENTION (10)				
THEME	DESCRIPTION	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Partnership inputs	Partnership inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is open to, and uses, MA partnership expertise to deliver and inform its interventions following a HSB incident when necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school makes ad hoc use of partnership expertise to deliver and inform interventions for some incidents of HSB, based on individual relationships within the MA partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incidents are responded to without involvement from the wider partnership where this would be beneficial.
Staff motivation	Staff motivation to intervene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff feel empowered and motivated to intervene to prevent or respond to instances of HSB. School staff are encouraged and supported to do so. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff identify the need to address HSB and want to intervene to prevent or respond to incidents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff have accepted at least some forms of HSB as an inevitable aspect of the school environment. School staff are not encouraged or supported to take action to prevent or to intervene in HSB incidents.
Thresholds	Understanding and application of thresholds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff have a shared understanding of, and respond in accordance with, thresholds for referring concerns related to HSB internally within school and externally to the partnership. Thresholds used in the school are consistent with those used in the wider MA partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DSL and some staff have a shared understanding of, and respond in accordance with, thresholds for referring concerns associated to HSB internally within school and externally to the MA partnership. The school's understanding of thresholds is consistent with that used in the wider MA partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a varied understanding and application of thresholds for incidents of HSB across the school staff.
Response to incidents	Response to young people involved in incidents that are abusive, violent or escalating in nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to HSB incidents consider and take steps to safeguard all students who were party to them, both those who harmed and those who were harmed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to HSB incidents take steps to safeguard some students who were party to them. Responses to HSB incidents are largely characterised by the use of school sanctions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses are focused on changing the behaviour of those who were harmed rather than those who harmed them. Responses feature victim-blaming language.
Physical environment	Physical environments following incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a HSB incident, the physical location where it occurred is recognised, subject to assessment and, where necessary, intervention is taken to prevent future incidents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a HSB incident, the physical location where it occurred is recognised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions following HSB incidents are focused solely on individuals involved, and do not include the physical location where they took place.
Policy framework	Policy framework for response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is aware of, and responds to, HSB incidents in accordance with statutory guidance (KCSIE) and national advice on sexual violence in schools. A Contextual Safeguarding framework is applied for responses to HSB incidents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is aware of, and responds in accordance with, statutory guidance (KCSIE) and national advice on sexual violence in schools to some HSB incidents. The school engages with child protection frameworks within which the wider MA partnership works, in addition to any requirements made by KCSIE, to inform their response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school responds to HSB incidents independently of reference to national guidance or advice.
Wellbeing of students	Wellbeing of students involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The on-going welfare of those involved in HSB incidents is monitored and reviewed, and further action is taken by the school (and where necessary the partnership) if the initial response appears to be ineffective. The school supports the on-going welfare of the wider student body and has multiple resources that prioritise student mental health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to HSB incidents continue to monitor on-going risks, and consider the legacy of incidents. Long-term safeguarding measures are allocated to social care professionals alone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses to HSB incidents are time-limited.
Response to trends	Response to identified trends following an incident	<p>Should a HSB incident reflect wider trends or patterns of behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant RSE content is reviewed and redelivered. Policies and procedures are reviewed and amended where necessary. Staff monitor for retaliation or evidence of students taking sides and target interventions with the partnership should this occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response to HSB incidents considers the wider student body through the delivery of evidence-based interventions such as assemblies and re-delivery of RSE. 	<p>The response to HSB incidents is focused solely on the individuals directly involved.</p>
Incident referral	Referral of violent, abusive or reoccurring HSB incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School refers HSB incidents to social care. This facilitates a partnership response to the incident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School makes referrals to social care. School intervention ceases following referral. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No referral to the partnership following incidents.
Peer support	Peer support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School empowers young people to support each other as part of the response to HSB incidents. Resources are in place to address challenging or negative peer influences associated with HSB incidents, e.g. via bystander approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of negative peer influence associated with HSB incidents is recognised and addressed by the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following HSB incidents young people intervene in sometimes problematic or harmful ways, such as threats or use of violence to discourage disclosure, which are not recognised by school staff.

Figure 7 RAG Tables Intervention

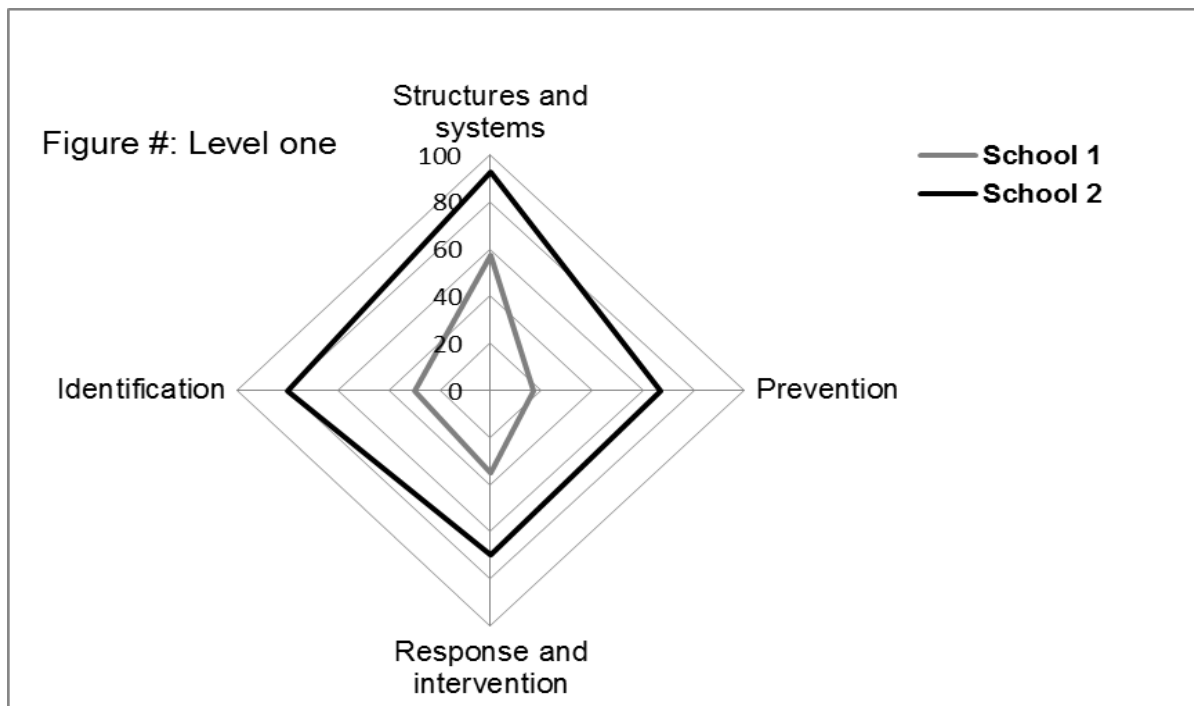


Figure 8 Radar chart for Level 1 Levers in two schools